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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5521
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
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RHMFISS/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 0262

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIRUT 002928

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NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/MARCHESE/HARDING

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/11/2026

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [KDEM](#) [EFIN](#) [LE](#) [SY](#) [IR](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: ALLEGED FINANCIAL LINKS BETWEEN HIZBALLAH AND
MICHEL AOUN'S MOVEMENT

Classified By: Jeffrey Feltman, Ambassador, per 1.4 (b) and (d).

[11](#). (U) This is an action cable -- see para 5 below.

[12](#). (S) Media reports suggest that Michel Aoun's Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) and Hizballah have a new area of cooperation: financing reconstruction for the south. Newspapers and media have carried stories and pictures that show FPM and Hizballah members distributing cash. If, as is rumored, FPM is distributing funds provided by Hizballah, then FPM is culpable of dealing with terrorist financing.

[13](#). (S) To cite only one report, An-Nahar on September 3 reported the following: "A week after the damage assessment carried out by Hizballah and the Free Patriotic teams in some villages in the south such as Ain Ebel, Debel, and Rmeish, the Jihad al-Bina organization (Hizballah's infrastructure development body), in collaboration with the Free Patriotic Movement, decided to pay indemnities so that families can repair their damaged houses, the number of which is 269. Payments were estimated at USD 257,250. Commenting on the move, Pierre Raffou, general coordinator of the Free Patriotic Movement, said, 'in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding (the February 6 MOU signed by Michel Aoun and Hassan Nasrallah) and in support to poor people in the South and while the state was totally absent, we worked on implementing the first stage in these villages. Other phases shall be completed soon with respect to assessing damages in the agricultural and trade sectors.'"

[14](#). (S) Aoun is obsessed with three goals -- toppling Siniora's cabinet, destroying the March 14 majority, and realizing his own presidential ambitions. He seems able to justify almost any cooperation with Hizballah as helping him succeed in those goals. We find the rumors credible that he plans to use street action, for example, in fighting Siniora's cabinet. While we do not have solid evidence proving that the FPM was distributing Hizballah-provided funds, we believe that the suggestions are strong enough to warrant action on our part. We urge that the USG should deliver very strong talking points to Aoun and to his U.S. representatives warning them that they risk violating USG laws on terrorist financing.

[15](#). (S) Action request: We would like to be able to cite instructions from Washington in delivering the following demarche to Michel Aoun, and we would like the same demarche to be delivered to FPM representatives in Washington (likely Tony Haddad). We also would like to be able to share this demarche with a couple of key FPM deputies, whom, we suspect, neither agree with all of Aoun's relations with Hizballah nor receive the straight story from him about our unhappiness

over those relations.

-- We are alarmed by recent media coverage of Free Patriotic Movement members distributing cash alongside members of Hizballah's Jihad al-Bina organization in south Lebanon.

-- Hizballah is a terrorist organization. Using money provided by Hizballah or working in financial cooperation with Hizballah or its organizations, including al-Manar, puts the Free Patriotic Movement at risk of breaking U.S. laws on terrorist financing. Penalties can include, inter alia, the freezing of financial assets that pass through the United States and can affect the ability to qualify for U.S. visas by FPM members known to be dealing with Hizballah financing. Being so closely associated with Hizballah can influence the status of FPM-related organizations in the United States.

-- Especially since the February 6 signing of the Memorandum of Understanding, we have repeatedly expressed our deep concern regarding the FPM's relations with Hizballah. We recognize that the FPM is not the only Lebanese organization that has tried to use Hizballah to advance its own political aims. But, in light of the Hizballah seizure on sovereign Israeli territory of two Israeli soldiers, it should now be crystal clear how untrustworthy Hizballah is as a partner.

-- The question of terrorist financing is a particularly serious one for us. The FPM should recognize its interest in putting distance between itself and Hizballah immediately. We would welcome any information you can provide to refute the media reports that the FPM has been involved in distributing Hizballah resources and is cooperation with Hizballah financially.

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End action request.
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